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Appointments reflect status results

PART ONE OF FOUR

by Rhonda Morin
Staff Writer

The appointment of the first female acting dean at the University of Maine in nine years may be an indication that an investigation of the status of women on campus prompted the administration to act immediately.

In addition to Julia M. Watkins as acting dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, two more women were selected in July and August to serve as assistant vice-presidents in separate departments.

One appointment occurred after the publication of a report compiled by the Task Force on the Status of Women at UMaine, while the other two occurred

just weeks after the report was made public.

A seven-month investigation

In December 1987, UMaine President Dale Lick told the task force — composed of faculty, staff and students — that part of its responsibility would be to collect evidence regarding underrepresentation of women in top administrative positions.

The task force was given seven months — until June 1, 1988 — to prepare findings and recommendations, including budgetary documents depicting the discrepancies in male and female pay scales. It was during these investigations that three top administrative positions were vacated and subsequently filled by three women, two of whom have worked at UMaine for several years.

Watkins, professor of social work and chair of the Department of Sociology and Social Work, was appointed acting dean of the College of Arts and Sciences in July after the resignation of Dean Michael C. Gemignani.

Joyce D. Henckler was selected as assistant vice-president for Enrollment Management in July, following a two month national search and several days before the task force investigations had concluded and were made public.

Furthermore, the August appointment of Judith Bailey as assistant vice-president of the Cooperative Extension Service prompts questions of whether the administration acted on the recommendations of the task force.

(see WOMEN page 4)



Julia Watkins

• Women

(continued from page 1)

Although these appointments occurred when the task force was collecting evidence supporting the claim that the administration was lagging in hiring women to the upper echelons of the university, some officials deny the task force's investigations prompted the selections.

"The appointments were a result of competency on the part of people," said John Halstead, vice-president of Student Affairs. "However, the level of consciousness and need to have women in leadership positions was raised by just having the (status of women at UMaine) report in progress."

John Hitt, vice-president for Academic Affairs, disagreed that the investigation and the final report influenced Watkins's appointment.

"She was appointed because she was the best person available," he said.

Hitt said he had known about Watkins's possible appointment "for some time prior to the report."

Although the report was dated June 1, 1988, it was made public on July 22, according to its cover letter.

Watkins and Henckler were appointed on July 1, while the investigations were in process. Bailey was selected in August, several weeks after the published report was released.

Bailey, who received her master's degree and doctorate at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Va., has a background in cooperative extension services.

She was responsible for the Service's relations at the University of Maryland and later was deputy director for the Service at the University of the District of Columbia.

Bailey said that it was her experience that got her the job.

"I haven't had the indication that my appointment was because I am a woman, but that I was the best candidate for that was interviewed," she said.

Watkins, who has been at UMaine since 1971, was one of the 1986 finalists for the College of Arts and Sciences deanship that resulted in Gemignani's appointment.

She believes Lick has "made a concerted effort" in hiring women to high administrative jobs and that she was hired on the grounds of her qualifications.

"I think I was appointed because of my competence, because of my understanding of the university as a whole, for having been here for a very long time and for the kinds of skills and abilities that one would bring to this job," Watkins said.

Watkins's appointment was not the result of a national search because the College of Arts and Sciences is in the process of a reorganization, splitting it into three separate colleges, and a temporary dean was needed, said Devon Storman, assistant to the vice-president for Academic Affairs.

Henckler also has served various student service positions at UMaine since 1971. She was chosen for the Enrollment Management position from a field of 64 candidates.

Although she does not deny the task force report held bearing in her appoint-

ment, she said she hopes the decision was based on her competency.

Report full of criticisms, recommendations

The Task Force on the Status of Women, commissioned by Lick in 1987, criticized the administration for "lagging behind other public universities and behind private industry in hiring and promoting women."

The committee was divided into three subcommittees that examined a wide range of issues, including classroom climate, recruitment, advancement opportunities, employment, language, campus media and organizations.

A series of open forums held at the Bangor and Orono campuses revealed women's frustrations in sex-segregated jobs, sexual harassment and an inadequate number of female adviser models for students.

After months of gathering evidence, the task force compiled a report on the status of women at UMaine that was full of criticisms and recommendations directed to the administration.